

Offender Release Home Planning



Scott Richeson

Director, Reentry and Programs

Ashley Morales

Community Reentry Specialist

State Responsible Offender Population

- 58,000 offenders supervised in the Community on Probation and Parole
 - 43 Probation and Parole Districts
- 37,800 incarcerated state responsible offenders
 - 30,400 in DOC's 41 prison facilities
- 600 offenders participating in Detention or Diversion Programs
 - 5 Detention/Diversion Centers

State Responsible Offender Population

- Over 90% of incarcerated population are released
- FY 2015 12,490 releases
 - 7,182 from State Prison Facilities
 - 5,308 from Local and Regional Jails
- DOC's recidivism rate is 23%*
 - 2nd lowest in the nation
 - State Responsible Jail only recidivism rate is 26.8%

*2011 release cohort based on 3 year return to SR measure

Release Preparation

- Agency philosophy is that everything we do can help prepare an offender for reentry
 - Every interaction between offenders and staff is an opportunity for role modeling, problem solving and changing criminal thinking
- Detailed DOC Operation Procedure 820.2, Release Planning
- Timely and thorough reentry planning is critical for successful transition

Home Planning Process

- Reentry preparation begins *at reception* into a DOC facility
 - Case Management Counselor assigned to each offender
 - Actuarial Risk and Needs Assessment – Updated Annually
 - Reentry Case Plan - Updated Annually
 - Reentry Home Plan - Updated Annually or with change
 - Evidence based programs offered to target needs
- Entered in DOC's automated offender management system
 - Real time information shared among prisons and probation and parole districts

HOME PLANNING PROCESS

Home Planning Process

- Multi-Disciplinary team addresses each offenders reentry needs
 - Counselor
 - Medical staff
 - Mental Health staff
 - Offender Workforce Development staff
 - Reentry Probation Officers
 - Community Reentry Specialists, if needed

Home Planning Process (Regular)

- Assisted by the prison counselor and other team specialists
 - Offender has responsibility to contact relatives and community resources
 - DOC makes available and utilizes 2-1-1 Virginia directory
 - 12 months before release, placed an Intensive Reentry facility nearest the home plan
 - Home plan suitability continually explored
 - Verified 6 months before release (letters, calls)
 - When applicable, mainstream benefits applications are made prerelease (i.e., SSI, SSDI, SSA, Veterans, Medicaid)
 - At 6 months prior to release a suitable home plan is referred by prison staff to the Probation and Parole District for investigation (physically visit site) and approval

Home Planning Process

- DOC relies primarily on community resources for re-entering persons
- DOC has limited Community Residential Programs (CRP) for offenders
 - Only 168 beds
 - Underfunded and DOC is seeking additional funds to cover increased costs
- Emergency housing (hotel) used for up to 30 days, also underfunded

Home Planning Process (Problematic)

- Problematic or no home plan cases
 - 12 months before release after other efforts fail, the case is referred to the DOC Community Release Unit for assistance
 - Assigned to a Reentry Specialist
 - Sentencing jurisdiction Probation and Parole Officers becomes involved in trying to find housing with continual communication with the HQ Unit and the prison counselor
 - Local reentry councils and community agencies are engaged (local departments of social services, non-profits, community services boards, etc.) for assistance
 - Reentry Probation Officers enter the institutions to assist the offender develop alternative plans

Types of Challenging Cases:

Subpopulations

- Sex offenders
- Mentally ill
- Physically handicapped
- Medically disabled needing skilled nursing care

Barriers Related to Housing

- “Not In My Backyard” mentality (nimbyism)
- HUD’s definition for chronically homeless, program eligibility
- Mandatory policies vs. Discretionary policies for PHAs
- Lack of auxiliary grant beds in assisted living facilities
- Lack of Medicaid beds available in skilled nursing facilities
- Lack of overall funding for community prisoner re-entry programs

Community Collaboration

- Governor's Coordinated Council on Homelessness
 - Solutions Committee
 - Veteran's Workgroup
- Geriatric Mental Health Partnership
- Community Residential Programs (CRP)
- Special Needs Notification
 - DSS, DMAS, DARS, DBHDS/CSBs
- Continuum of Care (CoC) providers
- Family Reunification programs
- Local Re-entry Councils
 - Probation and Parole Chiefs Co-convene with LDSS

Useful Links

When Discretion Means Denial: A National Perspective on Criminal Records Barriers to Federally Subsidized Housing

<http://povertylaw.org/sites/default/files/images/publications/WDMD-final.pdf>

The State of Permanent Supportive Housing in Virginia, 2015

http://www.vceh.org/images/VCEH/PDF/psh_report15.pdf

Virginia's Homeless Programs 2013-14 Program Year: A Report to the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees

<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/images/Housing/2013-2014-Homeless-Report-final.pdf>

2014 Policy and Legislative Agenda

<http://www.vceh.org/extras/2014%20Policy%20and%20Legislative%20Agenda%20Final.pdf>

The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2014-AHAR-Part1.pdf>

Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_OpeningDoors_Amendment2015_FINAL.pdf

Closing

DOC appreciates the Commission's work and suggests key opportunities for further focus:

- Establishing uniform regulation interpretations for Public Housing Authorities across Virginia
- Exploring the possibility of a State operated or contracted skilled nursing facility
- Supporting funding increases for DOC Community Residential Programs (CRP)
- Collaborating with DOC regarding housing policy initiatives as they affect the former offender residents